



Communication

One of the key elements of an effective leader is “communicating for understanding.” A common bond between ALL good leaders is their ability to communicate effectively. Our best leadership intentions can be enhanced or squelched by how well we communicate.

Road Map

<h2>Communication</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication Parts• Key Elements• Listening• Good Listening

Communication Parts

STATE: Communication between people is essential to accomplishing anything -- just look at our definition of leadership: YOU OTHERS GOAL. You can't even begin to reach the goal without it!

STATE: Fortune 500 companies specifically hire applicants with the ability to effectively communicate verbally, in writing, and with confidence.

STATE: Basic Communications consist of three parts: First there is a **message** or information to pass, someone to **send** the message, and someone who will hopefully **receive** the message. Therefore, the three critical parts of communication are the SENDER, the MESSAGE, and the RECEIVER.

ASK: Have you ever been misunderstood with what you have said?

It happens all the time.

STATE: Let's take a closer look at what happens here.

ASK: What are some of the ways we can kill communications in the workplace?

Encourage them to keep going for a few minutes. Their answers should reflect everyday life.

STATE: These things are referred to as **barriers** to communication.

ASK: If these are truly things that kill communications, what can we do to eliminate them?

Discuss effective ways to eliminate barriers and ideas that can lead to an action plan for the students. Things like closing the door, eye contact, putting the receiver at ease, not answering the telephone, not making light of their problems, paraphrasing, etc.

ASK: What is the advantage of removing as many barriers as possible?

This creates the environment for **effective two-way communications**.

Key Elements

STATE: Good communication can be difficult. The key is to focus on understanding and improving communication. Lets look at the key elements:

STATE: **Visual** elements are body language, **Vocal** elements are tone of voice, and **Verbal** elements are the actual words.

ASK: Which of these three do you think **tends** to have the greatest impact?

Visual elements.

ASK: Of Vocal and Verbal elements, which **tends** to have the next greatest impact?

STATE: Let's see how your answers match up with the experts.

Key Elements

- **55% - Visual**
- **38% - Vocal**
- **7% - Verbal**

STATE: According to research done by Professor Albert Mehrabian of UCLA, visual elements make up 55% of the message, vocal elements make up 38% of the message, and only 7% comes from the actual words used (verbal elements) to communicate the message.

ASK: So what does this tell us about the words we choose?

They only make up a fraction of the message!

ASK: What are some examples of the type of visual elements you have experienced?

Get input from everyone! There are a lot of good examples they can give such as rolling the eyes, hands on the hips, head shaking, crossed arms, wandering eyes, etc.

ASK: How do the vocal elements have an impact on the message?

Get more examples! Sarcasm is an easy one to illustrate, "Oh yeah, I'd **LOVE** to clean the head."

STATE: We may be saying all the right things, but actually sending something else to our receiver. What someone hears might not be what we are sending. It's not unusual for our visual and vocal elements to sometimes send conflicting and more or less intense messages than we intend.

Demonstrate examples of each of the three elements of communication and discuss how this is not always the level of impact in all our conversations. In other words, the verbal and vocal elements can jump to the highest impact sometimes. It depends on the communicator and the listener's perception.

STATE: When you look back and think about it, doesn't it seem like there have been times when you just wanted to say to your boss or someone, "YOUR ACTIONS ARE SO LOUD, I CAN'T HEAR WHAT YOU ARE SAYING!"

Listening

ASK: It's difficult enough to send the message, but how can you tell when someone is **really** listening? What are the clues?

ASK: So what does a good listener do?

Answers should include asking questions, restating what was said, good eye contact, paying attention, etc.

STATE: The opportunity to ask questions helps our communications in two ways. First, it provides better feedback; and second, it allows the communications to flow both ways.

ASK: Are listening skills something that comes easy to most of us? Why not?

Because we don't actively practice them.

STATE: This is a skill we all need to work on. We need to constantly remind ourselves to try and listen actively to what our people are telling us.

STATE: Let's look at some things we can do to help us become better listeners.

Good Listening

ACTIVITY: Give each participant a copy of the "Ten Commandments for Good Listening" (a master copy can be found at the end of this module). Go over each of the "Ten Commandments for Good Listening," using illustrations and examples from your own and their experience. Be sure to highlight the aspects of proactive listening.

STATE: By becoming better listeners, we reduce some of the barriers to communication.

STATE: Good communications starts with effective listening. Take what has been said here today and practice these skills with your subordinates, peers, and bosses. It **WILL** make a difference.

10
Commandments
for Good
Listening

1. **STOP TALKING:** You cannot listen if you are talking. Polonius (HAMLET) “Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice.”
2. **PUT THE TALKER AT EASE:** Help the person feel that he/she is free to talk. This is often called a permissive environment.
3. **SHOW THEM THAT YOU WANT TO LISTEN:** Look and act interested. Do not read your mail while they are talking. Listen to understand rather than to oppose.
4. **REMOVE DISTRACTIONS:** Don’t doodle, tap, or shuffle papers. Will it be quieter if you shut the door?
5. **EMPATHIZE WITH THEM:** Try to put yourself in his/her place so that you can see his/her point of view.
6. **BE PATIENT:** Allow plenty of time. Do not interrupt. Don’t start for the door or walk away.
7. **HOLD YOUR TEMPER:** Anger and emotion are strong barriers to good listening.
8. **GO EASY ON ARGUMENT AND CRITICISM:** This puts the other person on the defensive, which also provides a large barrier to good communications.
9. **ASK QUESTIONS:** This encourages the other person and demonstrates that you are listening and trying to understand. This generates feedback and additional questions for clarity.
10. **STOP TALKING:** This is first and last because all other commandments depend on it. You just can’t do a good job of listening while you are talking.

PEOPLE WERE GIVEN TWO EARS BUT ONLY ONE TONGUE, WHICH IS
A GENTLE HINT THAT WE SHOULD LISTEN MORE THAN WE TALK!
